

Appl. No. : 10/041,767
Filed : January 7, 2002

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider the above-captioned application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-51

Claims 1-51 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Nagaseko (Japanese reference '907). Claims 1-8, 10, 12, 14-25, 27, 29, 31-42, 44, 46 and 48-51 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Yamaguchi (Japanese reference '116). Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejection of these Claims. Nevertheless, to advance prosecution, Applicant has canceled Claims 1-17 without prejudice and has amended the remaining claims as outlined below to more particularly and distinctly claim Applicant's invention.

Claim 18 now recites "a printed circuit board drilling machine in combination with a printed circuit board, the drilling machine having a worktable for supporting the printed circuit board, a spindle, a drill bit and a controller configured to instruct the drilling machine to drill to a point in a work piece the printed circuit board, to retract said drill bit a retract distance, said retract distance configured such that a tip end of said drill bit remains below a top surface of said printed circuit board work piece and to drill a distance greater than said retract distance into said printed circuit board work piece."

Claim 35 now recites "a method for operating a printed circuit board drilling machine having a worktable, a spindle, a drill bit and a controller configured to control the operation of the drilling machine, the method comprising the steps of: positioning a printed circuit board on the worktable; drilling to a point in the printed circuit board a work piece; retracting said drill bit a retract distance, said retract distance configured such that a tip end of said drill bit remains below a top surface of said printed circuit board work piece, drilling a distance greater than said retract distance into said printed circuit board work piece.

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references do not disclose, *inter alia*, a printed circuit board or a method of operating a printed circuit board drilling machine with the above-noted limitations. For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 18 and 35 are in condition for allowance. The remaining pending dependent claims are also in

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condition for allowance because, *inter alia*, they depend either directly or indirectly upon one of allowable Claims 18 and 35.

New Claims

Applicant has added new Claims 52-54. Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are also in condition for allowance. For example, the cited art does not disclose either alone or in combination a method of operating a printed circuit board drilling machine comprising “positioning [a] plurality of circuit boards on [a] work table such that each of the plurality of circuit boards is associated with a spindle and a drill bit; drilling to a point within each of the plurality of printed circuit boards; retracting said plurality of drill bits a retract distance, said retract distance configured such that a tip end of said plurality of drill bits remains below a top surface of each of said plurality of printed circuit boards, drilling a distance greater than said retract distance into each of said plurality of printed circuit boards” as recited in Claim 52. Claims 53 and 54 are also in condition for allowance because *inter alia*, they depend either directly or indirectly upon one of allowable Claim 52.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office Action are inapplicable to the present claims. Accordingly, early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is most earnestly solicited.

The undersigned has made a good faith effort to respond to all of the rejections in the case and to place the claims in condition for immediate allowance. Nevertheless, if any undeveloped issues remain or if any issues require clarification, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicant's attorney in order to resolve such issue promptly.

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Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

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By: 

Rabinder N. Narula
Registration No. 53,371
Attorney of Record
2040 Main Street
Fourteenth Floor
Irvine, CA 92614
(949) 760-0404

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